

CONSUMER ALERT

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Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection



Wisconsin Lottery Players Targeted by Scammers

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MADISON – The Wisconsin Lottery and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) are urging players to think twice before giving out personal information to anyone who contacts them and says they have won a lottery prize.

The Lottery has heard from several players who recently have been contacted about supposedly winning a special drawing associated with the Mega Millions jackpot game. The caller has attempted to get them to provide money and personal information in order to "process" their prize claim.

The special drawing does not exist. The caller is a thief.

"Be suspicious of calls out of the blue that seem too good to be true," said Mike Edmonds, Lottery Director. "Don't let the idea of a big prize cloud your judgment and lead you into a big mistake."

Lottery, prize notice and sweepstakes scams are a significant issue for Wisconsin consumers. Among all consumer complaints logged by DATCP in 2012, the "Contest / Sweepstakes / Prize Notices" category received the tenth most complaints of all categories.

"Identity thieves often pretend to represent an institution you trust, and trick you into revealing personal information by phone or email," said Sandy Chalmers, DATCP's Division Administrator for Trade and Consumer Protection. "Legitimate sweepstakes and lotteries do not require winners to pay an upfront fee to collect a prize."

There are ways you can protect yourself from prize scams:

- Be wary of anyone who says you've won a prize in a game or drawing you never entered.
- Know that legitimate lotteries and contests will NEVER ask you to pay a fee to collect a prize.
- Think twice before providing bank account numbers, credit card numbers or Social Security numbers over the phone, especially to someone you don't know or on an unsolicited call.
- Be suspicious of "urgent" solicitations that suggest that you will lose a prize if you don't act immediately.

The Wisconsin Lottery will never contact players to tell them they've won a prize, unless they have entered a second-chance or special event drawing. The Lottery will never ask for personal bank information as a prerequisite to claiming a prize or require players to pay a fee or make special additional purchases to claim a prize.

If you're suspicious of a caller, please contact the Lottery at 608-261-4916 or send an email to info@wilottery.com.

For additional consumer information or to file a complaint, visit the Consumer Protection Bureau at <http://datep.wisconsin.gov>, send an e-mail to datep hotline@wisconsin.gov or call the Consumer Information Hotline toll-free at 1-800-422-7128.

Connect with the Consumer Protection Bureau on Facebook at [facebook.com/wiconsumer](https://www.facebook.com/wiconsumer).

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